

Bonkers, insane, mad as a cut snake, absolutely crazy... these are just some of the phrases which were bounced around when I broke the news to my family and friends that I was going to do a triathlon.

Admittedly, at a few points throughout the program I was inclined to agree with them. Why would anyone in their right mind WANT to push themselves this hard? To swim in murky, cold, open water when you could be relaxing with a glass of wine, to ride till your legs burn and lungs gasp for air when you could be watching a movie, and to run up hills which (to be honest) still scare the hell out of me.

However, at the end of each session- regardless of how hard, how sore, or how completely utterly exhausted I was... I noticed something interesting. All the crazy novices (myself included) were bend over double, heaving and (strangely enough) smiling.

So, for eight weeks we trained. Trevor and Dan were our trusty guides who steered us in the right direction and for that I am eternally grateful. I remember my first run at Mt Taylor, it was so hard and about half way through I had reached my limits, I wanted to stop, I wanted to go home. Fortunately I had Dan running beside me and talking me through it, be it his inspirational guidance or my stubborn ego I managed to run to the finish line. I must admit that, were it not for Dan I would have stopped and had a bit of a breather before walking back to my car and ducking off home. I'm proud to say I've toughened up a lot since that first run.

In addition to Trevor and Dan, I have met some fabulous people through the Novice program. I think there's something about triathlon which attracts a certain type of person. I can't quite put my finger on what that is... but I've decided that I like and respect this type of person.

We'd done the training, now it was race day! All the preparation, all the training came down to this one day. The Vikings novices were so very excited, many text messages were exchanged regarding all the important aspects of the day... what to wear, where to park, what time to arrive. Then, all of a sudden the day was here.

When I was standing there and someone was drawing numbers on my arms and legs I realised that I was actually going to do this, I was going to do a triathlon!

I was in the water and waiting anxiously for the start when I looked around and realised that everyone else looked exactly like me. We weren't scared, we were excited. The gun went off and we were away and swimming. I remembered my training and relaxed into the swim. Looking up every now and again to make sure I was going the right direction, the swim went pretty well. When I left the water I was having trouble catching my breath, that was until I heard and saw the mighty Vikings cheer squad! So I dug deep and ran hard to my bike.

I managed to do a good transition, mount my bike within the mounting zone and not fall off as I wrangled my feet into the bike shoes which were already clipped onto my bike (something I have had to work on after previous failures and many bruises). The bike leg was great fun, I look back now at pictures which were taken of me and I realise that I've got a big goofy smile on my face in each of them. You can try all you like to look like a serious athlete but you just can't hide happiness!

The run was hard (always is) but the feeling I got when I came down that finish chute was such a rush. The Vikings cheer squad whooped and hollered as I crossed the line.

All of a sudden I forgot the tired lungs and aching muscles, I forgot about all the tough training days, the cold mornings, the hills and the countless hours in the pool. I had an epiphany... I realised that I am indeed bonkers, insane, mad as a cut snake, absolutely crazy, I am now a TRIATHLETE!

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